



**University of
Zurich**^{UZH}

**Zurich Open Repository and
Archive**

University of Zurich
University Library
Strickhofstrasse 39
CH-8057 Zurich
www.zora.uzh.ch

Year: 2011

Perfect copy? [Buchbsprechung]

Roduit, Johann A R

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-011-9346-8>

Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich

ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-54554>

Journal Article

Accepted Version

Originally published at:

Roduit, Johann A R (2011). Perfect copy? [Buchbsprechung]. *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, 14(4):422-423.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-011-9346-8>

Sándor J., ed.: 2009. Perfect Copy? Law and Ethics of Reproductive Medicine. Budapest: Center for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine. 174 pages. ISBN: 978-963-9776-75-3. Price: free of charge

Perfect Copy? Law and Ethics of Reproductive Medicine is a collection of essays bringing together nine authors from different countries and from a variety of disciplines such as law, theology, bioethics and science to present different views on human cloning and stem cell research. The aim of the book is “to discuss various normative answers to cloning in a comparative context” (15). The volume was edited by Hungarian Professor Judit Sándor and published by the Center for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine in Budapest after a 2007 workshop on this topic, and represents an important inter-disciplinary and international dialogue.

Sándor, an expert of biomedical law in Budapest, describes how the debate on human cloning has shifted from questions and fears concerning reproductive cloning to the issues surrounding stem cell research, previously called therapeutic cloning. Andra’s Dinnye’s, the scientist who cloned the first mouse in Hungary, explains nuclear transfer cloning, the method used to clone animals (and potentially humans), and outlines the primary ethical concern involved: the destruction of human embryos for research. Péter Kakuk, a Hungarian bioethicist, looks at the Woo-Suk Hwang misconduct case in South Korea, and suggests international guidelines and better social control of science to prevent ethical violations. Knut W. Ruyter, a Norwegian theologian, analyses the rhetorical discourse of the biotechnological public debate in Norway by looking at two metaphors: the inclusive and the exclusive society. The former promises that biotechnology will benefit all, while the latter fears that biotechnology might endanger some. In the next two articles, Orio Ikebe, an anthropologist and bioethicist in Cairo, and Tade Matthias Spranger, a German lawyer and researcher, look at the legal and ethical aspect of human embryo research in Japan and Germany, respectively. Violeta Besirevic, a law professor in Serbia, analyses the controversy around cloning from a constitutional perspective. Hanne-Maaria Rentola, a theologian in Finland, analyzes the European Union and the United States President’s Council on Bioethics’ reports about stem cells to compare the European and American uses of the concepts of human dignity and humanity. Finally, Maurizio Salvi, Head of the EGE (European Group on Ethics in Science and new Technologies) Secretariat, describes the ethical conversation surrounding stem cells in the EU member states.

The title of the volume is misleading, as the book does not focus on reproductive cloning. Indeed, several reasons are given for why reproductive cloning is no longer at the centre of the cloning debate, including the scientific insights that a clone would differ from his or her donor because of environmental factors (12); they would not even be exact genetic copies as cytoplasmic contributions may influence the genes (20, 99); and the technique is not yet safe (31, 15, 99). On this basis, the ethical problem seems almost solved. But is it sufficient to ban reproductive cloning on the grounds of safety alone? What will happen when the procedure becomes safe? Or when couples start raising clones? It would have been interesting to discuss in detail the ethical and psychological implications of human asexual reproduction implied by the title. The essays give a few hints; for example, Besirevic writes that “protection of family, marriage and public safety may be a sufficient reason to uphold a constitutional ban on human cloning” (97) and human cloning “could radically alter the very definition of a human being and lead to the loss of the uniqueness of every human, individuality and freedom (...) cloning can undermine the concepts of parenthood, parental responsibility, fertility, and the status and value of children” (99–100). Unfortunately, there is no further ethical analysis on reproductive cloning or its possible benefits; for that, one will need to look elsewhere.

In addition, despite claiming to cover all forms of cloning (16), the volume does not mention a third type: ‘replacement cloning’, or replacing someone’s failing body with a new one by transplanting their brain. While this type of cloning is still only theoretical, it is worth mentioning to avoid another surprise like the birth of Dolly, the first cloned sheep in 1997.

Therefore, this book should not be regarded as a resource for those interested in reproductive and replacement cloning. But on the law and ethics of therapeutic cloning and stem cell research—the real focus of the work—this volume is a great addition to the literature.

Because of its interdisciplinary approach, this book will be accessible to readers coming from many different disciplines— both advanced scholars and those just picking up on the debate. The additional glossary will be of great help to anyone not familiar with scientific terminology, and readers will learn state of the art techniques

of therapeutic cloning and legal and ethical views in different countries. On that basis, I unquestionably recommend *Perfect Copy?* to anyone interested in therapeutic cloning.

Johann A. R. Roduit
Zurich, Switzerland